

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Archie R. Cole Middle School Library

100 Cedar Avenue

East Greenwich, RI 02818

Those in attendance were Ms. Carolyn Mark, Chair; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters, Vice-Chair; Mr. Matt Plain; Mr. Michael Fain; Dr. Yan Sun; Mr. Peterson; (arrived at 7:30 P.M.) and Mr. David Osborne. Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration; and Mr. Bradley Wilson, Director of Student Services were also in attendance.

7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order

Ms. Mark called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

III. Recognitions

a. Great East Music Festival, Megan Catelli and Brandon Levesque, Cole Teachers

Both teachers were recognized and congratulated on their extraordinary achievement. Meghan Catelli accepted the award certificate along with Brendan Levesque.

b. Retirees

1. Linda Cram, Teacher, Hanaford

- 2. Barbara Fodor, Teacher, Cole**
- 3. Nancy Gage, Speech Pathologist, District-wide**
- 4. Celia Schnacky, Teacher, EGHS**
- 5. Debra Scotto, Teacher, Cole**
- 6. Elaine Smith, Teacher, Eldredge**
- 7. Michael Wood, Teacher, Cole**
- 8. Eileen Murphy, Secretary, EGHS**
- 9. Gloria Gorman, Secretary, Cole**

Principals Meyer; Giusti; and Podraza as well as Mr. Wilson, Director of Student Services, read tributes to their respective teachers/secretary thanking them for their dedication and service to the district. Dr. Mercurio read a letter on behalf of Principal Cauley recognizing Linda Cram for her achievements. Dr. Mercurio added that each of the retirees dedicated his or her life and career to this district. He thanked them for their patience with him. The district does not exist until people come here to teach and students to learn. He expressed his gratitude to each of them. A group picture was taken.

The Committee also thanked Ms. Cram, Ms. Fodor, Ms. Gage, Ms. Schnacky, Mrs. Scotto, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Murphy and recognized their service to the district and presented them with a clock. Mrs. Gorman and Mr. Wood were not present.

IV. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

V. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular and executive for May 17, 2016**

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted (5-0) to approve the regular and executive minutes. Mr. Osborne abstained and Mr. Peterson was not present.

b. Special and executive for May 26, 2016

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted (6-0) to approve the special and executive minutes. Mr. Peterson was not present.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Ivy Day will be held on Friday, June 10 and Graduation will be held on Sunday, June 12 at the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium. School Committee members were urged to let Mrs. DiMeglio know if they plan on attending. Student athletes had a successful season. A letter on behalf of the district will be drafted and sent out from the School Committee recognizing our PTG groups for their support all year. Phyllis Humphrey was recognized as recipient of the Golden Apple Award.

VII. School Committee Concerns

Mr. Osborne announced, with great sadness that he will be stepping down from the School Committee due to a job related change. He has been offered a new position in Washington, D.C. A special election will be held on November 8 for this vacancy. He stated that it was a pleasure to have served. Ms. Mark remarked that Mr. Osborne was an exemplary School Committee member, putting in countless hours, and his leadership will be missed.

VIII. Action Items

a. Parental Leave-Monica Cardi, French Teacher, Cole

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted (7-0) to accept the parental leave.

b. Field Trip Extension-EGHS Peru Trip April 2017

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted (6-1) to the extension of the EGHS Peru Trip April 2017. Mr. Plain voted no. Mrs. Munzert noted that the extension is needed to visit Lake Titicaca. She explained that the students would be gaining an incredible educational experience. In order to experience this opportunity, the trip will need to be extended three days. The students will miss two days of school. (April 12 & 13).

Mr. Plain addressed Mrs. Munzert and told to her that he would be voting no and wanted her to know the reason why. He explained that he is a strong advocate for learning and students being exposed to a different way of life. However, he feels that every student attending public schools should have the same opportunity experiences regardless of resources.

c. OPEB Trust Participation

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. Sun, the Committee voted (7-0) to table the OPEB Trust Participation.

Mrs. Winters withdrew her earlier motion to approve.

Mr. Peterson informed the Committee that the town has voted aggressive. The town is in for a long-term investment. Mrs. Winters asked if the school department would fall under the town umbrella? If the school department makes a decision today for a sub account and a year later we want to make a different investment than the

town, can we withdraw as a separate account?

Dr. Mercurio commented that he and Mrs. Wilcox would work with The Trust. Mrs. Winters felt that there was no exit fee but a 30-day notice requirement. Mrs. Wilcox will confirm. Mr. Peterson suggested looking at our numbers before we sign on with the town. Mrs. Winters has concerns whether town vs. school department assets are even. Dr. Mercurio will defer action, look at present numbers, and explore different scenarios. Mr. Peterson suggested looking at the number of teachers who are retiring for easier transition projections. Look into whether we have potential to invest differently than the town is doing. Mr. Fain commented on the school department's liability and asked if the town will question us if we are not as aggressive? Mr. Peterson stated that we need to research before we make an informed decision.

d. Second Read/Possible Adoption of Policies

1. #2196 Field Trips

On a motion by Ms. Mark, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 5-2) to table the Field Trip Policy. Mr. Fain and Mr. Peterson voted no. On a motion by Ms. Mark, which was seconded by, Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted (7-0) for a third read. Attorney Matthew Oliverio will be invited to participate in the discussion. Ms. Mark will refer to the policy committee for further review. Mr. Peterson suggested keeping first sentence and strike footnote and everything after.

Mr. Osborne deferred to Mr. Plain on Mrs. DiMeglio's

changes in red in reference to the #2190 policy. Ms. Mark discussed cross-referencing policies without a policy number. Mr. Plain stated that it would be nice to cross policies but felt that by referencing them would be confusing and possibly creating a change in another policy. Mr. Peterson commented that the last paragraph opens up a lot of liability. We need clear language on what we can and cannot do. Mr. Plain emphasized that if a field trip is school sponsored, there should be no question whether some can go and others cannot. If the field trip is an educational experience, then why would some students participate and some not, just because of an inability to pay. Mr. Osborne noted that field trip participation should be all-inclusive, e.g., special needs. He wants the policy to give clear guidance and leadership to staff and parents.

2. #8145 Middle School and High School Academic Awards

On a motion by Mr. Fain, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted unanimously (7-0) to accept the Middle School and High School Academic Awards. Ms. Mark commented that we need to do a better job articulating the philosophy of what we do and do not do in recognition of academic awards. She feels that this is not understood by the community, which causes confusion for parents. Dr. Mercurio stated that it is important that we have a template for each policy and share the philosophy of the district's thinking for each policy. Going forward, he suggested exploring some of these templates and that we apply them to all policies.

IX. Advisory/Subcommittee Update

a. Mental Health Subcommittee

Ms. Mark reported that 50 staff members participated in the training for the mental health first responder professional development. It was a 2- ½ day program. She received rave reviews from staff, and they would like to see more PD opportunities. She would like to train a single individual as a trainer, so that this individual may provide training on an in-house basis. May is Mental Health awareness month, and there were various awareness strategies. At the secondary level, there were two parent awareness nights and one for all four elementary schools. In total, 50 parents participated. To encourage increased efforts for mental health issues perhaps on open house night tables could be set up with helpful information to identify all who can help. The next meeting will be held in October.

b. District Safety Team

Dr. Mercurio attempted to meet but only four people attended. He will reschedule for June 16 at 3:30 P.M. He hopes to have a more effective report on June 21. Mrs. Winters stepped forward to attend.

c. Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Patty Harwood, EG Special Education Advisory Committee, reported on the last SEAC meeting held on Tuesday, May 17.

She gave an account of the teacher priority survey that was sent to all six schools. The goal of the survey is to identify obstacles to success. Sixty- seven educators sent back the survey; SEAC was overwhelmed with the responses that we received.

Paraprofessionals play a huge role in special education. Fifty percent could use additional training in reading, writing and math. The math curriculum is only 9% effective for struggle learners.

Reading curricular should promote consistency from grade level to grade level. Parent and teacher communication is a two way street and we should be on the same page. Use of videophone conference meets the legal requirement and is an effective way to communicate. The goal of the SEAC data survey is to triangle it with teachers' feedback on communication and curriculum. SEAC's final meeting for the year will be held on Wednesday, June 8 at 6:30 P.M.

Mr. Osborne asked if there is a way to take some of the findings and answer some of their questions and process noting which ones are working and which ones are not. Dr. Mercurio will take results to administrative council.

X. Policy: First Read of New or Revised Policies

a. #2725 Advertising and Acknowledgements of Donations (new policy)

A second read is scheduled for June 21. A discussion was aimed at the control over what we do regarding the advertising and acknowledgments of donations. Supporting one uniform look and feel is important. Dr. Mercurio will contact Mr. Cobain, Athletic Director; Mr. Wilmarth, Facilities Director; and Ms. Bradley, Parks and Recreation for information on guidelines. Before we take legal, official action, we need to be aware of regulations and how to proceed. Mr. Peterson questioned who would decide how much money to spend on signs and advertising? There will need to be

guidelines on what is fair market value and maximize dollars for district.

XI. Discussion

a. Teaching and Learning: Bright Stars

Dr. Mercurio handed out an assessment report. What we need to do is to get from point a to b. We are heading in the right direction with our preschool program. Mrs. DePasquale and Mr. Wilson did a lot of work creating documents for review for assessment to be made. He will post the assessment on the field memo. Overall, we achieved 2 stars.

b. FY 2017 Budget

Our enrollment is up. In order to solve, an additional bus may need to be added at a cost of \$75,000.00, which was not budgeted.

c. School Start Times

Dr. Mercurio handed out a Quick Start Time update. He has kept the Committee updated on potential changes from September and budgeted in spring. There are no changes in riding times right now. He met with a representative from Ocean State and Mrs. Murphy. Each stop has been reviewed by the East Greenwich police and are safe. He will be putting this information out on his field memo after the June 21 School Committee meeting. Mrs. Murphy will be back on June 13, and he will ask her to attend June 21 meeting. Any reports put out will fluctuate because of enrollment. Mrs. Winters pointed out that there was a cut-off on Page 4.

Ms. Mark stated that she has been asked on multiple occasions for

end and start times. High School and Middle School 8:00 A.M.- 2:25 P.M. and Elementary Schools 8:50 A.M. - 3:15 P.M. Ms. Mark mentioned that we must be certain that school activities are not shifted to the A.M. Dr. Mercurio assured her that would not happen. He will address the Administrative Council that no practice schedules will be changed.

d. All Day Kindergarten

Dr. Mercurio will discuss Meadowbrook's numbers at the June 21 meeting. Perhaps an additional Kindergarten teacher and Para will need to be added. He is keeping an eye on the enrollment that would trigger additional staffing. He had a solution for the last 2 positions but he does not have a solution for this one.

Dr. Mercurio mentioned that he shared with the Frenchtown principal and staff that because of physical work at Frenchtown this summer there would be very limited access to the school.

e. Tech Update 2015-16 and 2016-17

Mr. Babson went over the Information Technology update for 2015-2016, 2016-2017 hand out. He stressed the need for good backup of data. The efficiency of using blanket purchase orders eliminates paper waste. Using ISP ring management will increase speed at Hanaford and Cole and lower costs. The hosting of Aspen for more control. He explained the automated processes associated with Robocalls for attendance, state reporting, and online services-STAR PARCC, DRA, and Blackboard Connect. Streamline and automate as much as possible. Allow employees self-portal management. Employees can update Aspen but not Munis. Portal is

key.

Electronic signatures have been perfected and ready for use. Dr. Mercurio said that he would check with legal counsel concerning legal documents. Mr. Babson explained that he has applied for reimbursement of approximately \$250,000.00 from the Wireless Classroom Initiative. He applied and received an additional \$50,000.00 to cover administrators' offices, and cafeterias. Wi-Fi coverage is complete in all administrative areas and classrooms. One-on-one implementation at high school expires in October 2017. Mr. Babson explained the potential buyout and will have more information in September. Ms. Mark asked the price of a new device and Mr. Babson stated approximately \$200.00-\$1,000.00. He mentioned allowing graduating seniors to take their devices after use through high school. Going forward, he suggested that we purchase the devices instead of leasing. He would like to see monthly meetings to discuss more town and school collaboration.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Peterson, which was seconded by Mr. Osborne, the Committee voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn at 9:41 P.M.

Margaret M. Ucci, Secretary